

The cover of the magazine 'Chai Today' features a vibrant collage of Jewish festival symbols. In the top left, there are pomegranates and a shofar. The center is dominated by a lulav (palm fronds) and an etrog (citron). To the right, a white shofar is partially visible. A colorful paper chain in shades of blue, yellow, orange, and red winds across the bottom and right side of the cover. The background is a light, textured surface.

Chai Today

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Chai Center
Parklaan 120
2650 Edegem

CHAI Today

CONNECT with the Chai Center



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Rabbi's Message

Dear friends,

Very soon we will be celebrating Rosh Hashanah, the onset of a New Year. Rosh Hashanah, is a very auspicious time to thank G-d for the blessings of the year bygone and pray for continued blessings for the coming year.

We also celebrate the New Year with a festive meal, with family or friends. During this meal, we eat all kinds of special foods. We dip the apple in honey for a sweet year. We eat the head of a fish to be a "head" and not a "tail", and pomegranates so that our blessings and good deeds should be as many as the seeds. These foods are called "simanim"—symbols or codes. They allude to and represent the blessings that we all pray for.

However, this practice seems a little strange. Why would we cryptically refer to the things that we wish for in the form of a symbol or a code? Why don't we just stick to explicitly asking for a sweet, prosperous, healthy year?

Perhaps one of the answers is that these symbols carry an important message for the new year.

We trust that G-d will bless us all with a year of health, prosperity and an abundance of good things. But these gifts themselves do not automatically bring inner happiness and fulfillment. Happiness is not proportionate to how much we possess or what we own.

G-d's blessings are like codes that need to be decoded to discover the hidden opportunities that lie within them. They are not an end in themselves. With each blessing that we receive we have a choice. We can use it superficially for pleasure and self-centered enjoyment, or we can use it as a means to generate goodness and bring meaning and purpose to our existence. When we choose to use our health, longevity and prosperity to help others, do another mitzvah, further our education or strengthen our relationships, then we have uncovered the hidden deep power behind the Divine gifts and blessings.

So this Rosh Hashanah G-d will surely do His part. He will bless us with all the wonderful things represented by these foods. Let us do our part and decode the message that comes together with each blessing. It is this combination that will bring the true and real sweetness and happiness into the new year.

Menachem Hertz

Chai Services

Services (Tefilot) are held in the **Chai Center, Parklaan 120, Edegem**
Friday evening: 18:00h
Shabbat morning: at 10.00h
 Followed by Kiddush

Together We Can Light up the World

Shabbat Candle Lighting

Join millions of women who light Shabbat candles and help foster global peace by bringing light to the four corners of the earth.

Candles must be lit before these times:

September 23.....	19.20
September 30.....	19.04
October 7.....	18.49
October 14.....	18.33
October 21.....	18.19
October 28.....	18.06
October 15.....	18.31
October 22.....	18.16
October 29.....	18.03
November 4.....	16.53

Care To Share

Any family announcements, upcoming events or personal wishes you would like to include in our next issue? E-mail us at info@chaicenter.be

- Mazal tov to Family Seror on the occasion of the Bar mitzvah of Liam.
- Mazal tov to Family Reich on the occasion of the Bar mitzvah of David.
- Mazal tov to Family Birinbaum on the occasion of the wedding of Olivia & Alex.
- Mazal tov to Families Levi, Samuel & Frank, on the occasion of the wedding of Tally & Serge.
- Mazal tov to Family Isaac & Carine Levi, on the occasion of the wedding of Yigal & Karen.
- Mazal tov to Patricia & Yves Nasan on the occasion of the engagement of Sacha & Noa.
- Mazal tov to Family Anysz on the occasion of the birth of their grandson Binyamin.
- Condolences to Ronen Levi & family on the passing of his dear father

Chai Center Programs

Join the broad range of ongoing activities at the Chai Center

- BMC: A club for girls, by girls, starring girls**

For more info or to join please contact Mussi +49 1575 1473258
- CTeen - The power of youth**

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ROSH HASHANAH

Sunday, September 25 - 1st Eve.

- 19:00 Maariv

Monday, September 26 - 1st Day

- 10:00 Shacharit
- 11:45 Shofar
- 14:30 Kiddush Lunch
- 15:00 Tashlich & Mincha

Tuesday, September 27 - 2nd Day

- 10:00 Shacharit
- 11:30 Shofar
- 14:30 Kiddush Lunch
- 15:00 Mincha

YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday, October 4 - Yom Kippur Eve.

- 18:55 Yom Kippur begins
- 19:30 Kol Nidrei

Wednesday, October 5 - Yom Kippur

- 10:00 Shacharit
- 12:15 Yizkor

- 18.00 Mincha
- 19.00 Neilah
- 20:01 Fast ends

**PRAYERS WILL BE HELD AT:
CHAI CENTER
PARKLAAN 120, EDEGEM**

**Due to limited seating, reservations
are highly recommended!**

Please see our website for the seating
diagram and for reservations.
Website: www.chaicenter.be
E-mail: info@chaicenter.be

Donation: 50 euro p.p.
Credit card and Paypal accepted via our website
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Sukkot Under the Stars

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SUKKOT MEALS
SUNDAY OCTOBER 9TH
MONDAY OCTOBER 10ST

Tefillat Arvit at 19.00h - followed by Dinner at 19.30h
In the Chai Center Sukkah!

To ensure a smooth organization reservations are a must.
Please RSVP before Oct. 3 - Email: info@chaicenter.be
We welcome any volunteers to help prepare, please contact Chaya!

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FIMA DIAMONDS BV
 PELIKAANSTRAAT 62, 2018 ANTWERPEN

ELUL CHECKLIST:

- Each day of the month of Elul (except for Shabbat), hear the sounding of the Shofar which symbolizes the call to self-improvement.
- Spend some “quiet time” each day taking personal inventory – with concrete plans resulting.
- Some ideas: Join a Torah study group. Add more mitzvot – like mezuzah, Tefillin, Shabbat candles, or charity.
- It is customary to have your Mezuzot and Tefillin checked at this time.
- During the last week of Elul, in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah, the Slichot are recited, to enhance the atmosphere of self-improvement. The first night is Saturday September 17, 2022 shortly after midnight (around 1 a.m.) and the following days (Sept. 18 - Sept. 25) in the early morning.

THE MONTH OF ELUL

August 28 - September 25

The Jewish calendar has the personal-prep month of Elul before the New Year's onset at Rosh Hashanah. If you'll be incorporating some changes in the New Year, your going to need some practice and Elul gives you a head start.

Major personal change doesn't happen overnight. It takes work, commitment and consistency.

It means giving new habits time. It means getting used to the new you. It's not simple, but neither is it as hard as it seems to be.

Chassidic master Rabbi Shneur Zalman likens the month of Elul to a time when “the king is in the field”. In contrast to when he is in the royal palace, “everyone who so desires, is permitted to meet him, and he receives them all with a cheerful countenance and shows a smiling face to them all.” The month of Elul therefore, is a most opportune time to realize our quest for self-improvement and coming closer to G-d. ■

ROSH HASHANAH THE SHOFAR: YOUR PERSONAL WAKE UP CALL

September 26-27

One hundred sounds are blown from the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. The shofar is a rams horn, the oldest and most primitive of wind instruments, yet its call touches the innermost chords of the soul. Its sound is simple and plaintive - a cry from the heart, like that of a lost child for its parents. It is a call to evaluate our actions and improve our ways, as expressed in the verse: “Awake sleepers from you sleep, slumbers, arise, from your slumber - examine your deeds, return and remember you Creator.”

The shofar proclaims the coronation of G-d as king of the Universe and brings to mind great events that involved a ram's horn. After the binding of Isaac, Abraham sacrificed a ram in place of his son; this ram's horn was blown 363 years later when the Jewish people gathered at Sinai to receive the Torah: its horn will also herald the coming of Moshiach and the final redemption of the Jewish people. ■



HIGH HOLIDAY GUIDE

LIFE IS A GAME OF CHESS

**YOU CAN'T UNDO THE
MOVES BUT YOU CAN MAKE
THE NEXT STEP BETTER**

ROSH HASHANAH CHECKLIST:

- Rosh Hashanah is two days (Sept 26 - 27 2022), with holiday services during the mornings and evenings. Come and join us! Grab a prayer book and get involved as best as you can for as long as you can.
- G-d is the King. The Shofar is His coronation trumpet. That's why it's blown several times throughout the holiday. Make sure not to miss it!
- Light the traditional Holiday candles each of Rosh Hashanah's two nights (see dates & times, page 11)
- Symbolically ask G-d for a “sweet” New Year by dipping a slice of apple dipped in honey at your first of four festive Rosh Hashanah meals (two days, two dinners, two lunches)
- On the second night, enjoy a fruit you haven't eaten in the past 12 months, another new symbol for a New Year
- Visit a fish-stocked body of water for Tashlich

YOM KIPPUR CHECKLIST:

- The Kaparot (atonement) service is done early the morning before Yom Kippur (October 4th) with a live chicken (or alternatively with money or fish) which is then donated to charity.
- It is customary to give charity generously and liberally during all the days of repentance, but on the day before Yom Kippur this is even more the case, for Tzedakah is a great source of merit and serves as protection against harsh decrees.
- It is a mitzvah to eat and drink on the eve of Yom Kippur. Two meals are eaten, one in the morning, and one just prior to the onset of Yom Kippur.
- Yom Kippur is a 25-hour fast from sundown to the following nightfall: We are to abstain from eating, drinking, washing, or anointing the body, wearing leather shoes, and marital relations.
- Light the holiday candles before sundown, (see dates and times page 11)
- There are many prayer services throughout Yom Kippur. If you can't make them all, at least join us for the special Kol Nidrei prayer that opens the first night services, and the Neila services as Yom Kippur ends.
- The Yizkor Memorial Services for the departed family members is an important part of the daytime services.
- Break your fast after the service that marks Yom Kippur's end.

TASHLICH: FISHING FOR WISDOM

Tashlich is observed on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, before sunset. We visit the banks of a river, lake or any stretch of water containing live fish, and recite special prayers. The words of the prophet Michah, which are recited at Tashlich, contain the meaning behind the custom: “(G-d) will cast our transgressions into the depth of the sea.” The Kabbalah teaches that water symbolizes kindness, and fish remind us of the ever-watchful eye of G-d's providence. Fish have no eyelids, so their eyes are always open. The creatures of the sea symbolize unity with the Divine. Righteous people are termed “fish of the sea” - just as fish are encompassed by the sea, the righteous are absorbed in the waters of Torah, completely united with G-d. ■

YOM KIPPUR

October 4-5

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year—the day on which we are closest to G-d and to the essence of our own souls. It is the Day of Atonement, when we repent and ask G-d to forgive us for our wrongdoings of the year that past. This day is the most solemn of the year, yet an undertone of joy suffuses it: a joy that revels in the spirituality of the day and expresses the confidence that G-d will accept our repentance, forgive our sins, and seal our verdict for a year of life, health and happiness.

TESHUVAH

Although often translated as repentance, teshuvah really means “return”: - a return to the true inner self that is always connected to its Source. The path of teshuvah begins with sincere regret for our transgressions and resolution to abandon those ways. It is also the desire to come close to G-d through prayer and increased performance of mitzvot, particularly the giving of charity to the poor, which uplift the soul to its rightful state.

KOL NIDREI: LOOK AT OUR HEARTS, NOT AT OUR CLOTHES

The first prayer of Yom Kippur, as the sun is setting, is Kol Nidrei, the cancellation of vows. The significance of this prayer dates back to the persecution of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition of the 15th century, when Jews were forced to convert to Catholicism under the threat of death. Outwardly, the Jews behaved like their Spanish neighbors, but in private they remained devout. Once a year they would gather in secret, declaring Kol Nidrei to vow their commitment to Judaism, despite their seemingly Catholic lives. Kol Nidrei was their proclamation that their external behavior was not who they were.

Our souls are cloaked in external garments, which are simply not us. Though we may think, talk and act in ways unmatching our Jewishness, that is not who we truly are. On Yom Kippur, we hope to transcend our outer garments and reach our inner souls. ■

SUKKOT THE SUKKAH: SEVEN DAYS UNDER ONE ROOF

October 10-16

A sukkah is an outdoor structure, where we dwell during the festival of Sukkot in symbolic demonstration of our faith in G-d's providence. Its roof is composed of vegetation such as green branches, corn husks or bamboo stalks.

The sukkah, its walls and roofing, encompass us entirely. Our whole being, from our intellect and emotion down to the tips of our toes, is involved with this mitzvah.

The Zohar teaches that on each of the seven days of Sukkot, we are joined in our sukkah by seven spiritual Ushpizin, honored guests: Abraham, representing the Divine (sefira) attribute of chesed, kindness; Isaac representing gevurah, restrain; Jacob, representing tiferet, beauty and balance; Moses representing netzach, eternity and perseverance; Aaron, representing hod, splendor; Joseph representing yesod, spiritual foundation, and King David, representing malchut, sovereignty.

The sukkah encompasses its visitors in unison. In this way, the sukkah reveals the simple and beautiful oneness of a people rooted in the oneness of their Creator. When all of Israel dwells in a single sukkah, our unity transcends our differences. ■

**Winning isn't getting
ahead of others, it
is getting ahead of
yourself.**

SUKKOT CHECKLIST:

- Sukkot is a seven-day holiday that commemorates G-d's protection of our ancestors after our Exodus from Egypt.
- Sukkot is observed by doing in your sukkah pretty much everything you do in your house: eating, learning and just hanging out.
- A kosher sukkah is simple: some wind-blocking walls and a natural-vegetation roof that leaves more shade than sun, and you're set. Not sure how to build one? Just surf the web. There's no shortage of affordable, easy-to-build sukkah available in all sizes - even tiny portable ones for travel. We Light holiday candles the first two nights. (See dates & times page 11)
- Enjoy the traditional festive dinners and lunches on Sukkot' first two nights and days. Each time you enter the Sukkah to eat a meal, say this blessing:
Baruch Atah Ado-nai Elo-hei-nu Melech Haolam Asher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-tav Ve-tzi-vanu Lei-shev Ba-sukkah.
- Do the special mitzvah of Lulav and Etrog each day of Sukkot, except Shabbat.

THE FOUR KINDS ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL THE UNITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE IS EXPRESSED BY BLESSING THE FOUR KINDS:

The etrog (citron) has both a pleasant taste and smell, representing one who is both knowledgeable in Torah and proficient in the observance of mitzvot. The lulav is the branch of the date palm, whose fruit is tasty but has no scent, representing one who is accomplished in Torah though less so in mitzvot. The hadas (myrtle branch) is tasteless but aromatic, representing one who, though lacking in Torah knowledge, is observant in mitzvot. The tasteless and scentless aravah (willow branch) represents the individual who lacks in both Torah and mitzvot. When we are bound together, each individual makes up for that which is lacking in the others. ■

SHMINI ATZERET AND SIMCHAT TORAH CHECKLIST:

- Parting is such sweet sorrow. Shmini Atzeret is an extra day tacked on to the end of Sukkot, allowing us to soak up those spiritual feeling in our sukkahs and stock up for the year ahead of us.
- And if it doesn't get you high enough, Simchat Torah will. On Simchat Torah, the "Rejoicing of the Torah", we don't study the Torah - we celebrate it. We hold it, hug it, and dance and sing with it. After all, G-d's morality manual is the greatest thing a human being could possibly celebrate.
- Light holiday candles both nights. (see dates & times page 11)
- Shmini Atzeret is marked by holiday services and meals at home. Our custom is to eat in the sukkah on Shmini Atzeret, but without the traditional blessing.
- Dance with the Torah on Simchat Torah night and the following day.
- The Yizkor Memorial Services for the departed family members is an important part of the daytime services on Shmini Atzeret.

Chess is not only about winning, sometimes it's simply about learning, and so is life!

SHMINI ATZERET AND SIMCHAT TORAH: FEEL THE BEAT

October 17-18

All reserve disappears in the exuberant dancing of Simchat Torah. Every Jew, learned and unsophisticated, feels a natural desire to take the Torah in his arms and dance. Simchat Torah taps a point in the soul and defies the difference that exists between one Jew and another.

The source for this happiness is of course the Torah. Yet throughout the entire Hakafot dances, the Torah is never opened; we dance holding it wrapped in its mantle. Though the Torah is usually associated with disciplined study, on Simchat Torah we approach it differently, singing and dancing in a manner that bears no apparent relationship to understanding. We are lifted beyond the realm of our individual identities and become the "feet of the Torah." These celebrations reveal that our bond with G-d and the Torah is unconfined by the limits of intellect.

Moreover, this celebration anticipates the ultimate celebrations that will accompany the coming of Moshiach and the advent of the Era of the Redemption. May we merit it now. ■



Blessings:

1. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Le-hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hazikaron.
2. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Le-hadlik Ner Shel Shabbat Kodesh.
3. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Le-hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hakippurim
4. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha -olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Le-hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov. *Light candles from a pre-existing flame only.
5. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam She-hechyanu Vekiyemanu Vehigi-anu Lizman Hazeh.
6. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Lai-shaiv Basukkah. *note: This Blessing is said each times we eat bread or cake in the sukkah.*
7. Baruch Atah Adonai Elo-heinu Melech Ha-olam Asher Ki-deshanu Bemitzvotav Vetzivanu Al Netilat Lulav.

Keep moving forward until you achieve your goal!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Shabbat
25 Erev Rosh Hashanah light candles by 19.16 blessings 1 & 5	26 Rosh Hashanah <i>Tashlich is said</i> *light candles after 20:21 blessings 1 & 5	27 Rosh Hashanah ends 20:19	28 Fast of Gedalia	29	30 light Shabbat candles by 19.04 blessings 2	1
2	3	4	5 Erev Yom Kippur *light candles by 18.55 blessings 3 & 5	6 Yom Kippur <i>Yizkor</i> ends 20.01	7 light Shabbat candles by 18.49 blessings 2	8
9 Erev Sukkot light candles by 18:44 blessings 4 & 5	10 Sukkot Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & 5 shake "the 4 kinds" *light candles after 19.50 blessing 4 & 5	11 Sukkot Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & shake "the 4 kinds" ends 19.48	12 Chol Hamoed Sukkot Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & shake "the 4 kinds".	13 Chol Hamoed Sukkot Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & shake "the 4 kinds".	14 Chol Hamoed Sukkot light Shabbat candles by 18.33 blessings 2	15
16 Hoshanah Raba Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & shake "the 4 kinds". light candles by 18.29 blessings 4 & 5	17 Shmini Atzeret Say blessings 6 in the sukkah. Say blessings 7 & shake "the 4 kinds". *light candles after 19.36 blessings 4 & 5	18 Simchat Torah ends 19.34	19	20	21 light Shabbat candles by 18.19 blessings 2	22

שנה טובה

סדר סימנים לראש השנה*



May it be Your will, Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers...

Apples Dipped in Honey

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שיתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה

...that You renew for us a good and a sweet year.

Carrots

...that our merits increase.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שירבו זכיותינו

Leeks

...that our enemies be decimated.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שיכרתו שונאינו

Beets

... that our adversaries be removed.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שיתלקו אויבינו

Dates

... that our enemies be consumed.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שיתמו שונאינו

Gourd (pumpkin)

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שיתקרע רוע גזר דיננו, ויסקאו לפניך זכיותינו

... that the decree of our sentence be torn asunder; and may our merits be proclaimed before you.

Pomegranate

... that our merits increase as (the seeds of) a pomegranate.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שתרבה זכויות כרמון

Fish

... that we be fruitful & multiply like fish.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שנתפרה ונרבה כדגים

Head of a Fish

... that we be as the head and not as the tail.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אל-הינו ואל-הי אבותינו, שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב

*This seder simanim is based on the nusach Ashkenaz Artscroll siddur.

KIDDUSH ROSH HASHANA EVENING

סגרי מרנו ורננו ורבותי:

ברוך אתה ה' אל-הינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הגפן:

ברוך אתה ה' אל-הינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל עם ורוממנו מכל לשון וקדשנו במצותיו, ונתן לנו ה' אל-הינו בראיה את יום הזכרון הזה, יום תרועה מקרא קדש זכר ליציאת מצרים, כי בנו בחרת ואותנו קדשת מכל העמים, ודברך אמת וקים לעד.

ברוך אתה ה', מלך על כל הארץ מקדש ישראל ויום הזכרון:

ברוך אתה ה', אל-הינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה:

QUESTION & ANSWER

BY: RABBI MOSS

Q We say "Next year in Jerusalem" every year at the end of the Seder and Yom Kippur. We pray that Moshiach should come and G-d will gather us all back to the Promised Land. So my question is, why would you spend so much time, energy and money on building a shul in the diaspora, if any day now Moshiach will come and we will all leave for Israel?

A You remind me of the story of poor Yankel, the unluckiest man in the Shtetl. Yankel could never succeed at anything. He had this special touch, any work he tried, he failed. Poor Yankel just couldn't get anything right. The townsfolk felt sorry for him, so they offered him a job he couldn't possibly get wrong: he would be the Moshiach Watcher. His responsibility would be to sit on top of the town hall and look out for the arrival of the Messiah, with a bugle at the ready to alert the town as soon as Moshiach appears. He would be paid a generous daily wage for his services. Yankel heard the job description, and politely declined the offer. "It's a great job, but I'm worried. What if Moshiach does arrive? I'll be out of work again..."

Let's not worry about what might happen when Moshiach comes. That will be the end of all of our worries. And anyway, the new shul will come to great use, even once we all return to Israel.

The Talmudic sages taught that when Moshiach comes, all the shuls around the world will be transported to Israel, and become extensions of the Temple in Jerusalem. This means that what we have built is not temporary, it is one stage of the ultimate and eternal building project of Jewish history, rebuilding Jerusalem.

Some understand this idea as a metaphor rather than a literal transportation of a building. The atmosphere of our local shuls, the air and the holiness they generated, will come along to Israel with us and contribute to the holiness of the Temple.

But others take it quite literally. The Third Temple will be surrounded by all the shuls of the world. But the question is why? If we have the Temple, what will we need shuls for?

The Chassidic master Rabbi Moshe of Kozhnitz explained: Every shul is like a miniature Temple. When we attend services now, we are preparing ourselves for the bigger and holier version we will experience in the real Temple in the future.

But not everyone goes to shul. For many and varied reasons,

there are Jews who never step into a shul. They are wonderful people and do many good deeds, but haven't connected to shul yet.

When Moshiach comes, truth and goodness will prevail. All resistance will fall away, and all reasons not to go to shul, valid and otherwise, will disappear. Even those Jews who refused to go to shul will want to come to the Temple.

But the light of the Temple will be too intense for someone who didn't do the basic training by coming to shul, the miniature Temple. So before they can experience the holy light of the Temple, they will need to enter the shul they didn't go to. The shuls will serve as antechambers to the Temple, where you can acclimatise your soul to the even greater light that shines from the Temple.

So let's not wait. Let's right now make our shuls a taste of next year in Jerusalem, where everyone feels at home, where each person can grow, and every soul can connect on their level.

And let's pray that Moshiach should come already. We will still have a shul. Yankel will be out of a job, and there'll be nothing to worry about.

Q I am shocked by the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the world. When Jew-hatred comes from backward extremists and street mobs, it isn't so surprising. But when university educated, well-read westerners, who know history and have access to the facts, are able to demonize Israel and the Jewish people, something is wrong. Has the world gone mad?

A The academics who single out Israel for contempt are guilty of ignoring the facts. But those who are shocked by it are also guilty of ignoring the facts.

History has shown that being educated has nothing to do with being moral. Some of the most cultured people have also been the most evil.

The Holocaust was committed by men who appreciated classical music and read the works of great philosophers. From the very cradle of modern culture and enlightenment came the most barbarous attack against humanity the world has ever seen. The notion that evil stems from the ignorant masses, and the enlightened class are paragons of goodness is simply a myth.

Ideas have consequences. An education that teaches moral relativism, that there is no right and wrong, that there is no absolute truth and there is no G-d, is teaching moral confusion. And in a moral vacuum it is easy for the lowest of human impulses to take root. Civilized hatred is hatred nonetheless.

It is worth bearing this in mind when choosing an education for our own children. Academic outcomes do not a mensch make. We need schools that will not just sharpen our children's minds by teaching them to read and write, but will sharpen their moral character by teaching wrong from right. ■



STORIES OF OUR SAGES

THE BROKEN ETROG BY MENACHEM POSNER

It had been a difficult year. Poor weather, dangerous travel conditions and high tariffs had made it almost impossible for the Jews of Ukraine to import etrogim (citrons) for the holiday of Sukkot. The etrogim—waved together with the lulav bundle every Sukkot after the recitation of special blessings—were normally brought from faraway Italy or even the Holy Land, but that year there were almost none to be found.

In the city of Berdichev, home to tens of thousands of Jews, there was but one etrog. Of course, it was given to the town's rabbi, the famed Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, for safekeeping.

Everyone knew the plan. On the first day of the holiday the rabbi would rise early in the morning, immerse himself in the purifying waters of the mikvah, and then make the blessing while holding the etrog and lulav. Then the etrog would be passed from hand to hand, allowing every Jewish person to fulfill the biblical obligation to take the "Four Kinds."

"I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO," HE THOUGHT. "EARLY IN THE MORNING, ON THE FIRST DAY OF SUKKOT, WHEN THE RABBI IS OUT IMMERSING IN THE MIKVAH, I'LL TAKE THE LULAV AND ETROG AND RECITE THE BLESSING OVER THEM. NO ONE WILL KNOW BUT ME."

Now, the rabbi had an assistant, a simple fellow who was tasked with overseeing the proceedings. "I know what will happen," said the assistant to himself. "First, the rabbi will make the blessing and wave the lulav and the etrog. Then the learned men will come for their turn to do the mitzvah. They will be followed by the respectable householders. Next will be the simple folk, who will all get their glorious moment. Then, when the sun is about to set and the day is about to fade away, I'll be the very last one to finally say the blessing over the lulav and etrog. Why must I always be the very last?"

"I know what I'll do," he thought. "Early in the morning, on the first day of Sukkot, when the rabbi is out immersing in the mikvah, I'll take the lulav and etrog and recite the blessing over them. No one will know but me."

And so, just after the sun rose, he sneaked into the rabbi's study, took the lulav and etrog in his trembling hands, and was about to chant the required blessings. But then—disaster struck.

Maybe it was because his palms were sweaty. Maybe it was because he was shaking nervously. But for whatever reason, the etrog slipped from his grasp onto the hard wooden floor below. To the attendant's horror, the etrog's pitom (wood-like protrusion) cracked right off its crown, rendering the fruit invalid.

Oh, he would have given all he had to be swallowed up by the earth. How would he face the crestfallen rabbi? How would he face the disappointed city? How would he face himself?

Every minute seemed like eternity as the attendant waited for his master to return. When Rabbi Levi Yitzchak entered his home, ready to do the mitzvah, the attendant had no choice. Gazing downward, in a trembling whisper, he told the rabbi what he had done.

"Master of the World," cried the rabbi in a booming voice filled with love and wonder, "look how precious Your children are! Even this simple, unlearned son of Yours is so eager to fulfill Your commandment that he risked his job to fulfill Your will at the earliest opportunity!" ■



12 PEOPLE WHO LEFT THEIR MARK ON ROSH HASHANAH

BY YEHUDA ALTEIN



1 ADAM

Rosh Hashanah, the head of the Jewish year, coincides with the sixth day of Creation—the day G-d created Adam, the first human. This is by no means coincidental. G-d specifically chose the birthday of the first human as the day that marks the Jewish New Year.

2 EVE

Why do we celebrate Rosh Hashanah on the anniversary of humankind, as opposed to the anniversary of the universe (six days earlier)? Because we—descendants of Adam—play an integral role in Creation. G-d created an incomplete world. It is up to us to use the coming year to fill in that gap, by instilling the world with Divinity and sanctity, one mitzvah at a time.

3 SARAH

Shortly after Adam was created from the dust of the earth, G-d determined that it was "not good for man to be alone" and He created Eve (Chava), the first woman. Rosh Hashanah is thus the anniversary of the creation of the first man, as well as the first woman. Ironically, while Eve was the paradigm of fertility (the very name Chava means "mother of all life"), the other women on this list struggled to conceive.

4 ISAAC

Our matriarch Sarah was barren for many years, until miraculously giving birth to Isaac at the age of 90. Our Sages tell us that it was on Rosh Hashanah that G-d "remembered" Sarah, resulting in Isaac's conception. To recall this event, the Torah reading of the first day of Rosh Hashanah relates the story of Isaac's birth and formative years.

5 RACHEL

The Torah reading of the second day of Rosh Hashanah also features Isaac. It relates the story of the binding of Isaac, in the merit of which we pray that G-d judge us favorably and grant us a year of blessings. One detail of this story is the ram whose horns were tangled in a thicket—recalled by the shofar, made from a ram's horn.

6 JOSEPH

Rachel watched as her sister Leah bore Jacob one son after the next, while she remained barren. Finally, on Rosh Hashanah, Rachel was also remembered by Hashem resulting in her pregnancy with Joseph.

7 CHANA

Chana, mother of the prophet Samuel, is the third of the trio of barren women who were remembered on High on Rosh Hashanah. Some add that Rosh Hashanah was the day she offered a silent prayer in the Tabernacle in Shiloh, which the High Priest Eli mistook as a sign of intoxication. In commemoration, we read Chana's story in the haftarah of the first day of Rosh Hashanah. This moving account underlines the power of prayer, demonstrating that if we invest our hearts and souls into our prayers, G-d will surely heed our requests.

8 GEDALIAH

After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first Holy Temple in Jerusalem, he appointed the righteous Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, as the governor of the remaining Jews. Under his leadership, the small group of Jews began to recover and reclaim some sense of peace and security. However, this tranquility was not to last. On Rosh Hashanah, Gedaliah was slain by a jealous, treacherous Jew named Yishmael. Whoever survived the massacre fled to Egypt, and the last embers of Jewish life in the Land of Israel were extinguished. To commemorate this sad milestone in our history, the day following Rosh Hashanah is kept as a fast day, known as Tzom Gedaliah.

9 R' AMNON

One of the most soul-stirring prayers recited on Rosh Hashanah is Unetaneh Tokef. Its passages describe in vivid terms how all created beings pass before G-d on this day, and He decides the fate of each one. We are reassured, however, that even if negative occurrences are in store, "repentance, prayer, and charity revoke the evil of the decree." Legend has it that it was composed by an early medieval scholar named Rabbi Amnon. After being punished by the local duke for refusing to renounce his faith and become a Christian, the crippled sage was brought to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, where he led the congregants in a newly composed addition to the High Holiday liturgy.

10 R' SHIMON

The machzor—the prayer book used on the High Holidays—is replete with prayers exclusive to Rosh Hashanah (and Yom Kippur). Many of these prayers are known as piyutim, liturgical compositions written in poetic style expressing the awesomeness of the day. One of the first composers of piyutim was Rabbi Shimon the Great, a saintly tenth-century scholar from Germany. Many of the piyutim in the machzor were penned by him, and some of them include the Hebrew acrostic: Shimon bar (son of) Yitzchak. Legend has it that one of Rabbi Shimon's sons was kidnapped and raised as a Christian, rising in rank until he was appointed pope. On a mission to Rome on behalf of the Jewish community, Rabbi Shimon met with the pope and discovered his long-lost son, who subsequently returned to Judaism.

11 JEWISH SPIRIT

Over the course of our history, Jews have taken the most extreme measures possible to mark this holy day and perform the sacred rite of blowing the shofar. Shofars were even smuggled into concentration camps and Soviet gulags and blown in secrecy, demonstrating that no one and nothing can destroy the indomitable Jewish spirit.

12 YOU

Rosh Hashanah is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity, and blessing. But it is also a joyous day, when we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe depends on G-d's desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when we accept His kingship anew each year on Rosh Hashanah. This is something that is up to each and every one of us, by hearing the shofar blasts and resolving to serve G-d over the upcoming year to the best of our ability. So the true hero of Rosh Hashanah is no one else but you.

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Wishing you a

happy new year!

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